Great and Horrible

NEWS

FROM

The West *of* ENGLAND.

OR,

A true and full

ACCOUNT

Of a Tradesman that hanged his Apprentice for opening a Letter, who was afterwards cut down by some of the Neighbours, and brought to life again; for which his Master is now in Goal.

TOGETHER

With a Narrative of all the Circumstances.

With Allowance.

London, Printed for *D. M.* 1679.

Great and Horrible

NEWS

FROM

The West *of* ENGLAND.

MAnyfold and wonderful are the Enormities of wicked and depraved men, their deep Contrivances, and ſubtle ways to bring themſelves to ruin when they dream not of approaching danger, lay Snares for others, forget the place, ſo blinded with malitious thoughts they ſee not what's moſt plain before their Eyes, but preſſing forwards are intangl'd in the bailful deeds that their own hands have done, as the Pſalmiſt wiſely

wiſely declares, *The Pits they digged they themſelves are fal'en in.* And 'tis moſt juſt before the God of all the Earth, what meaſure they to others meet the ſame ſhall be returned; for ſure it is, though many times men ruine themſelves on deſperate Ills, yet the evil conſequence is far remote from their affected thoughts, and preſent hopes o're power their ſtupified ſence, and baffle all Objections Reaſon brings as Bars to ſtay their full Career in Sin: But Conſcience often ſtarts at Crimes, and checks the haughty will. Conſcience, that Guide impowered in man to lead aright, and keep him from deſtruction, that perfect Innocence that Heaven formed immaculate and pure, till by Apoſtatate diſobedience it was made more vile; yet, notwithſtanding all the ſubtilties of Darkneſs that the crafty Fiends could raiſe, it ſtill retains part of its primal Luſtre with an abhorrence of preſumptuous baſeneſs, and often curbs the daring Miſcarants in the ſupreme exceſs of all their lofty pride, and makes them oft confeſs that Arrogance their contumelious Soul at other times would ſcorn to own, or once ſo much as think upon: And ſtrange it is when men indulge themſelves and make it their chief ends to aim at miſchief, which in fine muſt needs produce inevitable fate. But it is grown ſo epidemical, that thoſe who wonder at it are themſelves more wondered at, and Piety's not only laid aſide, but counted as a feigned

ed Form, compoſed of endleſs toil, leſt it ſhould hinder thoſe contagious follies they ſo much reſpect, and ſtop the torrent of audacious Ills; but ſure it is, (though it may long delay) that Juſtice will at laſt try all their Actions; and if found too light his preſſing hand will wound the Pecant with an unreſtrained force, whoſe deadly harm no Balm on Earth can heal, no Bribe turn back, nor ſecret place obſcure, when mercy gives it way; eſpecially when Crimes grow great, and are beſmeared in Blood, the fitteſt Marks that Vengeance levells at, and oft accoaſts the Murderer with ſuch horrour, that himſelf proclams at unawares the fatal Maxim of his own deſtruction, and, plunged in fears, unwillingly betrays himſelf; as may be fully ſeen in this Narration I ſhall here relate, whoſe ſad Effects may be a warning to all thoſe whoſe lawleſs minds are fixed upon Evil.

In a County in the *weſt* lived a certain Tradeſman in ſome repute for ſeveral years, having got many Cuſtomers among the Gentry and others, he was of a rugged diſpoſition, having only one Apprentice, a ſtripling Youth of about eighteen years of Age. This Youth, being a Tradeſman's Son in the ſame Town, and of an accute and ingenious faculty, took much delight in reading, and would always be very inquiſitive after news; the which his Maſter privately noteing, he ſuſpected, as he has ſince declared,

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that he had got a trick to open the Letters that in his ſaid Maſters abſence came to his hands; read them, and afterwards cloſe them ſo dexterioufly, that it could hardly be diſcerned; for which his ſaid Maſter had often beat him, but he would never confeſs; but to prevent which ſuſpicion, and for his further ſatisfaction, he order'd a Neighbour of his if any ſuch Letters came in his abſence to receive them for him; and moreover charg'd his Apprentice to direct the Bearer thereof to the aforeſaid Neighbous houſe, and not himſelf to meddle with any, the which for ſome Months was performed: But on *Monday*, the 21*ſt* of *January*, his Maſter very early in the Morning rid out to buy Corn for his uſe, and lighting of a parcel ſome what nearer home than he expected; but had not been long gone but a Man on Horſe back knocked at the Door; it being ſcarcely day the Youth was not up, but immediately ſlipping on his Clothes came to the Door and asked him his buſineſs, who told him he had a Letter, and beſides muſt needs ſpeak with his Maſter; he told him his Maſter was gone to ſuch a place, and ſhewed him the houſe where he muſt leave it, and told him the cauſe, but the people not being up and the Meſſenger in haſt, the Youth, after many Objections, (and the others perſwaſions) ventur'd to take in the Paper; and having it by himſelf deſirous to renew his former practice, for many are moſt vehe-

vehement to affect what they are moſt forbidden; but before he had compleated his Enterprize his unexpected Maſter came, who having met upon the Road the Man that brought it, having ſome diſcourſe, he told him he had left him a Letter; who not expecting but that it had been ordered as formerly, as ſoon as he came home went to enquire as aforeſaid, but they told him they neither ſaw nor received any; who in a rage went to his man and demanded the Letter, which he delivered, but being cloſed in haſte it was plainly ſeen it had been opened, with which he charged him: The youth with ſome faint excuſes denyed for a time, but at laſt confeſſed and begg'd pardon for his fault, but nothing leſs than his life could ſatisfie the revenge of his cruel Maſter; yet cunningly ſtifled the outward appearance of his inward rage; but turning from his man, and going up Stairs, he cut of a piece of the Bead-Cord, and formed it according to his Helliſh Will; which finiſhed, he called up the Youth who dreamed of no ſuch cruelty, though otherways perhaps afraid of his ſevere Maſter's Correction; but no ſooner being come but he claped the fatal Nooſe about his Neck, and by violence drew him up upon a Hook that was faſtened in the Wall, where, as it is thought, he ſtood ſometime to ſee the ſtrugling Youth, till he ſuppoſed him to be quite breathleſs, then his Conſcience ſmiting him for what

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he had done, or perhaps to ſave himſelf from all ſuſpition; he ran out, as one amazed, and called ſeveral Neighbours, telling them, That his Man had hang'd himſelf, and how, who entering beheld the dreadful ſpectacle. But after their near approach they could perceive him to have life, not being extinguiſhed, where-upon they cut him down, and after much rubing and powering in of Cordial Waters brought him to his ſences. And being recovered they began to expoſtulate with him why, or for what cauſe, he laid violent hands upon himſelf, who with a faint voice replyed that his Maſter was the Executioner and the Cauſe, and deſired them to ſecure him, which they did, who being brought before a Juſtice, and the Youth ſworn againſt him, he confeſſed the Fact, and the cauſe that inticed him to it for which he was eommitted to the County-Goal to anſwer it at the next Aſſizes.

The lamentable diſaſter this youth had like to have ſuffered, not only the loſs of his life, but alſo the Ignominy and Repute of ſelf-violation, had not the Almighty, out of the abundance of his never-failing mercies, prevented it: This I ſay may be a caution and warning to all people how they diſpoſe of their Children to ill-affected men, who in their rage can know no mean ——

FINIS.